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A brief thank you to our
loyal readers

Celebrating the New Year with Dande!

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A photograph showing the interior of Bar Tapas. It features a long bar with blue stools, shelves filled with bottles, and a dining area with tables and chairs. The lighting is warm and inviting.

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A collage of five images showcasing food and drink options at Paseo Herencia. It includes a sandwich from Che Bar, a crepe from Drunk's Denial, a breakfast spread from Fusion Cuisine, and Starbucks coffee. The collage also features the Paseo Herencia logo and text.

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Trump endorses Mike Johnson to stay on as House Speaker despite government funding turmoil

By MICHELLE L. PRICE

Associated Press

WEST PALM BEACH, Fla.

(AP) — President-elect Donald Trump on Monday endorsed House Speaker Mike Johnson, providing crucial backing for the Louisiana Republican as he prepares for what is expected to be another contentious speakership race this week.

Trump said in a post on his social media platform that Johnson "is a good, hard working, religious man" and said he "will do the right

thing, and we will continue to WIN."

"Mike has my Complete & Total Endorsement," he wrote.

Johnson thanked Trump for the endorsement and added, "The American people demand and deserve that we waste no time. Let's get to work!"

The signal of support from Trump comes despite his frustration with a spending deal Johnson pushed through the House days before Christmas that failed to achieve his central goal of

raising the debt limit.

But other Republicans have been less forgiving. Far-right criticism over the spending ordeal has left Johnson's continued leadership of the incoming GOP majority once again in jeopardy. Though a deal was reached, averting a holiday shutdown, Johnson had to rely on Democrats to keep the government running, highlighting the limits of his influence and exposing cracks in his party's support.

The speaker's first two fund-



Speaker of the House Mike Johnson, R-La., talks to reporters after passing the funding bill to avert the government shutdown at the Capitol in Washington, Friday, Dec. 20, 2024.

Associated Press

ing plans collapsed as Trump, who does not take the oath of office until Jan. 20, interceded with calls to suspend or lift the government debt ceiling.

Johnson, who has worked hard to stay close to Trump over the last several months, convinced the president-elect that he would meet his demands to raise the debt limit in 2025.

Trump had remained quiet about Johnson's fate before a Jan. 3 leadership vote for over a week, even as some Republicans signaled that they may not support Johnson for the role.

Rep. Victoria Spartz, one of the Republicans who opposed Kevin McCarthy's initial bid for the speakership, said in a statement Monday that "our next speaker

must show courageous leadership to get our country back on track."

The Indiana lawmaker went on to make a series of demands for the next leader of the GOP majority, which included major spending reform.

Rep. Andy Harris, who is the chair of the ultra-conservative House Freedom Caucus, had also indicated that Johnson's future as speaker is not guaranteed before the holidays.

In a Dec. 20 post on X, Harris said that Republicans have not done enough to bring down "spending, deficits and inflation" since Trump's electoral victory in November.

Because of this, Harris wrote, "I am now undecided on what House leadership should look like in the 119th Congress." □

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Will New Year's Eve be loud or quiet? What are the top 2025 resolutions? AP-NORC poll has answers

By MARK KENNEDY and LIN-LEY SANDERS

Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — If you're planning on ringing in the new year quietly at home, you're not alone.

A majority of U.S. adults intend to celebrate New Year's Eve at home, according to a new poll by The Associated Press-NORC Center for Public Affairs Research.

"As I've gotten older over the last few years, it's like if I don't make it to midnight, it's not a big deal, you know?" says Carla Woods, 70, from Vinton, Iowa.

Nearly 2 in 10 will be celebrating at a friend or family member's home, and just 5% plan to go out to celebrate at a bar, restaurant or organized event, the poll found.

But many U.S. adults will celebrate the new year in a different way by making a resolution. More than half say they'll make at least one resolution for 2025.

There's some optimism about the year ahead, although more than half aren't expecting a positive change. About 4 in 10 say 2025 will be a better year for them personally. About one-third don't expect much of a difference between 2024 and 2025, and about one-quarter think 2025 will be a worse year



(Associated Press Illustration / Peter Hamlin)

than 2024.

Relaxed New Year's Eve plans for many

Kourtney Kershaw, a 32-year-old bartender in Chicago, often fields questions from customers and friends about upcoming events for New Year's Eve. She said this year is trending toward low-key.

"A majority of who I've spoken to in my age range, they want to go out, but they don't know what they're going to do because they haven't found anything or things are just really expensive," she said. "Party packages or an entry fee are like a turnoff, especially with the climate of

the world and how much things cost."

As expected, younger people are more interested in ringing in the new year at a bar or organized event about 1 in 10 U.S. adults under 30 say they plan to do that. But about 3 in 10 older adults 60 and above say they won't celebrate the beginning of 2025 at all.

Anthony Tremblay, 35, from Pittsburgh, doesn't usually go out to toast the arrival of the new year, but this year he's got something special cooked up: He and his wife will be traveling through Ireland.

"I don't do anything too crazy for New Year's, usu-

ally. So this is definitely a change," he said. "I wanted to do something unique this year, so I did."

Woods will be working New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. She answers calls on The Iowa Warmline, a confidential, noncrisis listening line for people struggling with mental health or substance use issues.

"Holidays are really hard for people, so I don't mind working," she said. "I'm passionate about it because I have mental health issues in the family and so being able to help people is rewarding to me."

Younger Americans are more likely to make a reso-

lution

Every New Year's also triggers the eternal debate about resolutions. A majority of U.S. adults say they intend to make a New Year's resolution of some type, but millennials and Gen Z are especially likely to be on board about two-thirds expect to do so, compared to about half of older adults. Women are also more likely than men to say they will set a goal for 2025.

Tremblay hopes to lose some weight and focus more on self-care more sleep, meditation and breathing exercises. "It's probably a good year to focus on mental health," he said. Many others agree.

About 3 in 10 adults choose resolutions involving exercise or eating healthier. About one-quarter said they'll make a resolution involving losing weight and a similar number said they'll resolve to make changes about priorities of money or mental health.

Woods' resolutions are to stay social and active. As a mental health counselor, she knows those are key to a happy 2025 and beyond: "Probably one of my biggest resolutions is trying to make sure I stay social, try to get out at least once a week get out and either have coffee or do something with a friend. □

The world population will be 8.09 billion on New Year's Day after a 71 million increase in 2024

By MIKE SCHNEIDER
Associated Press

The world population increased by more than 71 million people in 2024 and will be 8.09 billion people on New Year's Day, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released Monday.

The 0.9% increase in 2024 was a slight slowdown from 2023, when the world population grew by 75 million people. In January 2025, 4.2 births and 2.0 deaths were expected worldwide every second, according to the estimates.

The United States grew by 2.6 million people in 2024, and the U.S. population on New Year's Day will be 341 million people, according to the Census Bureau.

The United States was expected to have one birth every 9 seconds and one death every 9.4 seconds in January 2025. International migration was expected to add one person to the U.S. population every 23.2 seconds. The combination of births, deaths and net international migration will increase the U.S. population by one person every 21.2 seconds, the Census Bureau said.

So far in the 2020s, the U.S. population has grown by almost 9.7 million people, a 2.9% growth rate. In the 2010s, the U.S. grew by 7.4%, which was the lowest rate since the 1930s. □



The crowd reacts after Australia's Sam Konstas hits a six during play on the first day of the fourth cricket test between Australia and India at the Melbourne Cricket Ground, Melbourne, Australia, Thursday, Dec. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

An appeals court upholds a \$5 million award in a sexual abuse verdict against President-elect Trump

By LARRY NEUMEISTER and MICHAEL R. SISAK
Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — A federal appeals court on Monday upheld a jury's finding in a civil case that Donald Trump sexually abused a columnist in an upscale department store dressing room in the mid-1990s.

The 2nd U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals issued a written opinion upholding the \$5 million award that the Manhattan jury granted to E. Jean Carroll for defamation and sexual abuse.

The longtime magazine columnist had testified at a 2023 trial that Trump turned a friendly encounter in spring 1996 into a violent attack after they playfully entered the store's dressing room.

Trump skipped the trial after repeatedly denying the attack ever happened. But he briefly testified at a follow-up defamation trial earlier this year that resulted in an \$83.3 million award. The second trial resulted from comments then-President Trump made in 2019 after Carroll first made the accusations publicly in a memoir. In its ruling, a three-



E. Jean Carroll exits the New York Federal Court after former President Donald Trump appeared in court, Sept. 6, 2024, in New York.

Associated Press

judge panel of the appeals court rejected claims by Trump's lawyers that trial Judge Lewis A. Kaplan had made multiple decisions that spoiled the trial, including by permitting two other women who had accused Trump of sexually abusing them to testify. The judge also had allowed the jury to view the infamous "Access Hollywood"

tape in which Trump boasted in 2005 about grabbing women's genitals because when someone is a star, "you can do anything."

"We conclude that Mr. Trump has not demonstrated that the district court erred in any of the challenged rulings," the 2nd Circuit said. "Further, he has not carried his burden to show that any claimed

error or combination of claimed errors affected his substantial rights as required to warrant a new trial."

In September, both Carroll, 81, and Trump, 78, attended oral arguments by the 2nd Circuit.

Steven Cheung, a Trump spokesperson, said in a statement that Trump was elected by voters who de-

livered "an overwhelming mandate, and they demand an immediate end to the political weaponization of our justice system and a swift dismissal of all of the Witch Hunts, including the Democrat-funded Carroll Hoax, which will continue to be appealed." Roberta Kaplan, a lawyer who represented Carroll during the trial and is not related to the judge, said in a statement: "Both E. Jean Carroll and I are gratified by today's decision. We thank the Second Circuit for its careful consideration of the parties' arguments." The first jury found in May 2023 that Trump sexually abused Carroll and defamed her with comments he made in October 2022. That jury awarded Carroll \$5 million.

In January, a second jury awarded Carroll an additional \$83.3 million in damages for comments Trump had made about her while he was president, finding that they were defamatory. That jury had been instructed by the judge to accept the first jury's finding that Trump had sexually abused Carroll. □

Rhode Islanders' data was leaked from a cyberattack on state health benefits website

PROVIDENCE, R.I. (AP) — Cybercriminals who hacked Rhode Island's system for health and benefits programs have released files to a site on the dark web, a scenario the state has been preparing for, Gov.

Daniel McKee said Monday. The state has an outreach strategy to encourage potentially impacted Rhode Islanders to protect their personal information, according to a press release from McKee's office.



Gov. Daniel McKee gives his victory speech during an election night gathering of Rhode Island Democratic candidates and supporters on Nov. 8, 2022, in Providence, R.I.

Associated Press

The governor said it wasn't yet clear if all of the files stolen from RIBridges have been posted to the dark web, a part of the internet hosted within an encrypted network and accessible only through specialized anonymity-providing tools. "Right now, IT teams are working diligently to analyze the released files. This is a complex process and we do not yet know the scope of the data that is included in those files," according to a statement from McKee's office. McKee said in an afternoon press conference that Deloitte, the company that built and maintains RIBridges, has been in contact with the cybercriminals.

The state is working with Deloitte to generate the list of impacted individu-

als, officials said. Letters will be sent to those individuals with instructions on how to access free credit monitoring.

State programs that rely on RIBridges include Medicaid, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program known as SNAP, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, Childcare Assistance Program, Rhode Island Works, Long-term Services and Supports, the At HOME Cost Share Program and health insurance purchased through HealthSource RI.

"While this data has been compromised, that does not mean it has been used for identity theft purposes yet," the statement added. McKee urged Rhode Islanders to take a series of

steps to protect their financial information including: reaching out to all three credit reporting agencies Equifax, Experian, and TransUnion to freeze their credit; contacting one of the reporting agencies to order a free credit report; and requesting a fraud alert be placed on credit files.

Residents should also use multi-factor authentication instead of just one password to access their information and be on the lookout for fake emails, phone calls or texts that look legitimate. Law enforcement officials are also investigating the data breach, McKee said, although he said the chances of apprehending those responsible is daunting given the nature of the crime. □

Kvelashvili is inaugurated as Georgia's president, complicating its path toward EU

By SOPHIKO MEGRELIDZE
Associated Press

TBILISI, Georgia (AP) — Former soccer player Mikheil Kvelashvili was formally inaugurated as president of Georgia on Sunday, cementing the ruling party's grip in what the opposition calls a blow to the country's EU aspirations and a victory for former imperial ruler Russia. Outgoing pro-Western Georgian President Salome Zourabichvili said Sunday morning that she was vacating her residence at the Orbeliani Palace in Tbilisi. She joined the crowd of her supporters that gathered outside the residence, but insisted that she was still the legitimate office holder.

"I will come out of here, come out to you and be with you. ... This presidential residence was a symbol as long as there was a president here who was legitimate. I bring legitimacy with me," Zourabichvili told a crowd of supporters outside the palace.

She called Kvelashvili's inauguration a "parody."

Kvelashvili, 53, who was the only candidate on the ballot, easily won the vote earlier in December given the Georgian Dream par-



Georgian President-elect Mikheil Kvelashvili speaks at his swearing-in ceremony at the Georgian Parliament in Tbilisi, Georgia, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2024.

Associated Press

ty's control of a 300-seat electoral college that replaced direct presidential elections in 2017. It is made up of members of Parliament, municipal councils and regional legislatures. In his speech Sunday, Kvelashvili promised to be "everyone's president, regardless of whether they like me or not." He called for the nation to unite be-

hind him around "shared values, the principles of mutual respect, and the future we should build together." Georgian Dream retained control of Parliament in the South Caucasus nation in an Oct. 26 election that the opposition alleges was rigged with Moscow's help. The party has vowed to continue pushing toward accession in the European

Union but also wants to "reset" ties with Russia. Georgia's outgoing president and main pro-Western parties have boycotted the post-election parliamentary sessions and demanded a rerun of the ballot. In 2008 Russia fought a brief war with Georgia, which led to Moscow's recognition of two breakaway regions as independent, and

an increase in the Russian military presence in South Ossetia and Abkhazia. Critics have accused Georgian Dream established by Bidzina Ivanishvili, a shadowy billionaire who made his fortune in Russia of becoming increasingly authoritarian and tilted toward Moscow, accusations the ruling party has denied. The party recently pushed through laws similar to those used by the Kremlin to crack down on freedom of speech and LGBTQ+ rights. Georgian Dream's decision last month to suspend talks on their country's bid to join the EU added to the opposition's outrage and galvanized protests.

Protesters in front of the parliament building on Sunday held red cards, in reference to Kvelashvili's career in soccer.

"Because today our president is a footballer, we are showing him a red card. The next step will be sending him off the pitch. The Georgian people will definitely do this, because it was a circus that they have held today in the parliament," protester Sofia Shamanidi told The Associated Press. □

Hundreds of soldiers freed in the latest prisoner exchange between Russia and Ukraine

KYIV, Ukraine (AP) — Russia and Ukraine have exchanged prisoners of war in the latest such swap that saw the release of hundreds of captives and was brokered with the help of the United Arab Emirates, officials said Monday.

Ukraine's President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said 189 Ukrainian prisoners, including military personnel, border guards and national guards along with two civilians were freed. He thanked the UAE for helping negotiate the exchange.

Russia's Defense Ministry said that 150 Russian soldiers were freed from captivity as part of the exchange in which each side released 150 people.

The reason for the discrepancy in numbers wasn't immediately clear.

"We are working to free everyone from Russian captivity," Zelenskyy said in a statement.

"We do not forget anyone." He posted pictures of Ukrainian soldiers sitting on a bus, some holding the country's blue-and-yellow flags.

Zelenskyy said that those freed from Russian captivity included defenders of the Snake Island off the Black Sea port of Odesa, which was seized by Russia in the opening days of its invasion, as well as troops who defended the city of Mariupol, that was captured by Moscow's forces early in the war after a nearly

three-month siege. "The return of our people from Russian captivity is always very good news for each of us," Zelenskyy said. "And today is one of those days: our team managed to return 189 Ukrainians home."

In Moscow, the Defense Ministry said that Russian servicemen were first taken to the territory of Russia's neighbor and ally Belarus, where they received "psychological and medical assistance" before moving to Russia.

Russia and Ukraine have conducted dozens of such prisoner exchanges during the nearly three-year war. The prisoner exchange came as President Joe Biden announced Mon-

day that the United States will send nearly \$2.5 billion more in weapons to Ukraine as his administration works quickly to spend all the

money it has available to help Kyiv fight off Russia before President-elect Donald Trump takes office. □



In this photo taken from video released by the Russian Defense Ministry Press Service on Monday, Dec. 30, 2024, a group of Russian soldiers sit in a bus after being released in a prisoners swap between Russia and Ukraine, at an unspecified location in Belarus.

Associated Press

Musk causes uproar for backing Germany's far-right party ahead of key elections

BERLIN (AP) — Tech entrepreneur Elon Musk caused uproar after backing Germany's far-right party in a major newspaper ahead of key parliamentary elections in the Western European country, leading to the resignation of the paper's opinion editor in protest. Germany is to vote in an early election on Feb. 23 after Chancellor Olaf Scholz's three-party governing coalition collapsed last month in a dispute over how to revitalize the country's stagnant economy. Musk's guest opinion piece for Welt am Sonntag a sister publication of POLITICO owned by the Axel Springer Group published in German over the weekend, was the second time this month he supported the Alternative for Germany, or AfD.

"The Alternative for Germany (AfD) is the last spark of hope for this country," Musk wrote in his translated commentary.

He went on to say the far-right party "can lead the country into a future where economic prosperity, cultural integrity and technolo-



German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier announces the decision to dissolve the German Bundestag and schedule a new election for February 23 next year, in Berlin, Friday, Dec. 27, 2024.

Associated Press

logical innovation are not just wishes, but reality." The Tesla Motors CEO also wrote that his investment in Germany gave him the right to comment on the country's condition. The AfD is polling strongly, but its candidate for the top job, Alice Weidel, has no realistic chance of becoming chancellor because other parties refuse to work with

the far-right party. An ally of U.S. President-elect Donald Trump, the technology billionaire challenged in his opinion piece the party's public image. "The portrayal of the AfD as right-wing extremist is clearly false, considering that Alice Weidel, the party's leader, has a same-sex partner from Sri Lanka! Does that sound like Hitler

to you? Please!" Musk's commentary has led to a debate in German media over the boundaries of free speech, with the paper's own opinion editor announcing her resignation, pointedly on Musk's social media platform, X. "I always enjoyed leading the opinion section of WELT and WAMS.

Today an article by Elon

Musk appeared in Welt am Sonntag. I handed in my resignation yesterday after it went to print," Eva Marie Kogel wrote.

The newspaper was also attacked by politicians and other media for offering Musk, an outsider, a platform to express his views, in favor of the AfD.

Candidate for chancellor, Friedrich Merz, of the Christian Democratic Union, said Sunday that Musk's comments were "intrusive and presumptuous". He was speaking to the newspapers of the German Funke Media Group.

Co-leader of the Social Democratic Party, Saskia Esken said that "Anyone who tries to influence our election from outside, who supports an anti-democratic, misanthropic party like the AfD, whether the influence is organized by the state from Russia or by the concentrated financial and media power of Elon Musk and his billionaire friends on the Springer board, must expect our tough resistance," according to the ARD national public TV network. □

Mexico to investigate a town that thanked a drug lord for holiday season gifts for children

MEXICO CITY (AP) — Mexico's president said Monday that prosecutors are investigating officials in a town where a sign was posted thanking a drug lord for holiday season gifts for children.

In the past, drug cartels in Mexico have often handed out gifts or bags of food to local people around the holidays, to try to improve their image or build local support. The cartels often want local people to warn them of army raids, but at the same time the gangs usually extort protection money from local residents. Videos posted on social media last week from the town of Coalcoman, in the western state of Michoacan, showed a sign at a Christmas fair thank-

ing Jalisco cartel leader Nemesio Oseguera, better known by his nickname "El Mencho," for the gifts.

"The children of Coalcoman thank Mr. Nemesio Oseguera and his sons, 2,

3, and Delta 1, for their noble gesture. Thank for your gifts," the sign read.

A person speaking over a loudspeaker repeated that message, but it was unclear how much local officials

were involved in or aware of the message, or whether they had approved of it. Such fairs are often in part organized by civic, neighborhood or other groups. President Claudia Sheinbaum said Monday that local officials were being investigated for any possible links to the sign.

"Obviously we condemn these signs," she said. "A criminal group cannot hold a public event to promote the acceptance of violence."

Sheinbaum said federal prosecutors were investigating whether the town's mayor "has ties to criminal groups, or who put this sign up."

In areas of Michoacan along the border with Michoacan that are domi-



Mexican President Claudia Sheinbaum gives a media briefing from the National Palace in Mexico City, Oct. 2, 2024.

Associated Press

nated by the powerful Jalisco cartel, it is not unusual to see signs of the gang's control.

The cartel set up checkpoints on roads in the area, and attacked their rivals with roadside bombs and bomb-dropping drones, while at the same time donating trampolines for the children of local residents. The cartels have also obliged some local residents to join demonstrations against army operations. The Mexican government's policy of not confronting the cartels has often left local officials in the uncomfortable position of having to deal with the local gangs, and even in some cases, hand over part of the municipal budget to them. □

Dining in? Try making a local favorite How to make “funchi hasa”

(Oranjestad)—A night in can be just as fun as a night out on the town, especially if you got the right snacks to munch on. One of the most famous Aruban snacks or appetizers is “funchi hasa” (fried polenta sticks). A super easy meal that adults and children will both enjoy. Here’s how to make it!

Before we start, get to know the basics

So what is funchi hasa? Funchi, or Aruban polenta, is a popular side dish for local dishes, like soups, stews and fried fish. Made from a corn flour, water and butter mixture, this appetizer is traditionally eaten alongside a warm meal. However, locals also like to fry sticks of funchi for a quick and filling snack.

Ingredients (measured by heart)

1. Polenta flour*
2. Water
3. Butter
4. Salt to taste

Directions

Bring water to a boil in a medium-sized sauce pan. Add in some salt and butter to taste in the boiling water and let this dissolve and melt. Then, gradually add the flour while stirring with a wooden spoon. The mixture will start to begin to harden pretty fast, so be careful not to add too much. At this phase of cooking, you want a goopy thick mixture, but thin enough so you can continue to stir to get all the lumps out.

After reaching a semi-firm, yet flexible texture, grab a baking pan or any large, deep plate, and pour the mixture in. Be sure that this plate is wet or greased so that the mixture does not stick to the bottom. Let this cool completely while it firms up for the last time. Once it's cooled you can enjoy it as is, topped with some butter or shredded cheese. Or, you can take it to another level of deliciousness.



When your funchi is firm enough, cut it into strips (size is up to you). Heat up some oil in a pan and fry those babies up! After frying, you can top it with some cheese or enjoy it with your favorite dipping sauce.

Note: We recommend the FUNCHI FRESKU polenta flour brand that is sold in all supermarkets on the island. You can also use yellow corn flour from the brand PAN. □

Photo credit of fried funchi sticks: Jacqueline Felida on Pinterest.

Feeling parched? Grab refreshment by the side of the road!



(Oranjestad)—Touring the island in the blistering heat can leave one feeling rather thirsty and looking to cool off. Luckily there are a few stands along the roads of Aruba that can offer you just what you need: a nice, refreshing beverage!

These “coconut stands” can be found at several locations on the island, where you can cool off with delicious smoothies, drinks, snacks, and of course, fresh coconuts! Perfect during family outings around the island, these stands can be found in the following locations:

- Near the red Anchor in San Nicolas
- On the Linear Park in Oranjestad (in front of airport runway)
- At the California Light House hill
- Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruin
- Bushiribana Beach (Near the Ling & Song Supermarket) □

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A brief thank you to our loyal readers

Dear readers of Aruba Today,



At the end of 2024, we want to take a moment to thank you, our loyal readers, from the bottom of our hearts. Your support and engagement mean everything to our small but dedicated team. Every week, we have worked with passion and commitment to provide you with the best English-language newspaper, delivering news that informs you about the most important topics affecting our world and a taste of our Aruban culture and traditions.

As we look forward to 2025, we wish you a year filled with prosperity, happiness, and health. Thank you for your trust and support. We look forward to continuing to inform and inspire you in 2025.

With warm regards and best wishes,
The Aruba Today Team

PS: Aruba Today will be on a short holiday Wednesday and Thursday. Our next issue will be published Friday, the 3rd of January. □



The history of Dande: a musical tradition celebrating the year's end



The end of 2024 is near and Aruba is ready to send off the year with melodies of the traditional Dande!

The story of Dande has been told in different ways, but the question remains: where did Dande come from? Dande is a folklore tradition of Aruba that began in 1890. The instruments used include the *wiri* and drum. To complete the group, one singer accompanies the instruments. A *chapi* (a traditional hoe) was also used to create the rhythm of Dande, resembling the sound of the *wiri*.

After the New Year's gunshot, the Dande group would set out to perform wherever they stopped until Three Kings Day. This means they were away from home for almost a week. This was because houses used to be very far apart, and the group had to walk long distances. Some would travel with donkeys to reach different houses and sing. Upon arrival at a house, the door would be closed, and the group would start singing. When the homeowner opened the door and invited them inside, they would enter. Before finishing their song, the group would step outside, where the homeowner would invite them back in to give them something. The elders recounted their joy in seeing young people arrive at their homes to sing.

The Lyrics of Dande

The singer starts by addressing the head of the household, traditionally a man but nowadays it can be a woman. Then they acknowledge the family and children. The lyrics of Dande are sacred. Dande is a message from God to the home and family. Traditionally, the lyrics would humbly ask for blessings, harvests, and much

more. However, as Dande has modernized, the lyrics have also evolved. The rhythm of Dande is smooth and not fast like it is performed during festivals. The lyrics must reflect humility and avoid political references.

Dande Becomes More Modern

Over time, Dande has gradually modernized, with the inclusion of more instruments and changes to the lyrics. Some of these instruments include the *cuatro*, *maracas*, *mandolin*, *guitar*, *accordion*, or *marimba*, but not electronic instruments. Now, the current generation is embracing Aruba's folklore, Dande, but they must strive to preserve its originality.

Donations

In the past, after the groups finished singing, the homeowner would invite them inside to give them a small treat or something to accompany the group on their journey. They were also given small pieces of ginger candy. Over time, this tradition changed, and now, when the singer performs and offers blessings, the family places money into the singer's hat. □

Photo: National Library of Aruba



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Auntie Anne's Pretzels | Aruba Aloe | Baskin-Robbins | M8 Botique
Juan Valdez Café | Hungry Piranha - Pizza, Wings & More
The Brownstone Ribs and Seafood | Moments & Memories Jewelry
Fusion - Piano & Wine Bar | Shalom Body & Soul Spa | Treasure Cove
Magnet Perfume Jewelry & Cosmetics | The Lazy Lizard | The Market
Shalom Hair & Nails Bar | Twist of Flavors | Dunkin Donuts
Coming Soon: El Patio Tacos & Tequila

Paseo Herencia celebrated 2024 with Grupo di Betico



Oranjestad, Aruba – Paseo Herencia celebrated 2024 in grand style with the rhythms of Grupo di Betico.

Reflecting on a successful year, Paseo Herencia proudly carried out various campaigns and events aimed at providing memorable

experiences for its visitors and customers. In addition, the mall reinforced its commitment to the community through impactful projects such as "Gift of Education" and "Gift of Sports". As is tradition, Paseo Herencia concluded the year with a festive gathering featuring

Grupo di Betico, transforming the plaza into a lively hub of celebration. This special evening brought the community together to commemorate the achievements of the past year while looking ahead to the future. Paseo Herencia extends heartfelt gratitude to every-



one who joined the celebration and supported them throughout 2024. The team looks forward to welcoming visitors and the community once again in 2025, continuing to deliver exceptional shopping, dining, and entertainment experiences. For more information about

upcoming events and initiatives, visit their Facebook and Instagram page at @paseo-herencia and their website www.paseoherencia.com. □

Wishing all a happy new year 2025.

Aruba to me

ORANJESTAD — You are back and we would like to portrait you! By inviting you to send us your favorite vacation picture while enjoying our Happy Island.

Complete the sentence: Aruba to me is Send your picture with that text (including your name and where you are from) to: news@arubatoday.com and we will publish your vacation memory. Isn't that a special way to keep your best moments alive? Please do note: By submitting photos, text or any other materials, you give permission to The Aruba Today Newspaper, Caribbean Speed Printers and any of its affiliated companies to use said materials, as well as names, likeness, etc. for promotional purposes without compensation. Last but not least: check out our website, Instagram and Facebook page! Thank you for supporting our free newspaper, we strive to make you a happy reader every day again. For today we received a lovely message from Andrea and Mark Siegel, East Hampton, NY;

Bryan Siegel New York, New York;
Karen and Donald Feldman, Lynnfield, Massachusetts &
Craig Feldman New York, New York

They wrote to us saying: "It all began 30 years ago, where the seeds of the Siegel and Feldman friendship were planted in the beautiful island of Aruba.

Over the years this bond has grown stronger, extending to our children, Bryan and Craig who share a truly special connection.

This Christmas was filled with joy as we spent it together.

We loved sitting on Eagle Beach at Costa Linda, reminiscing about cherished memories, watching breathtaking sunsets, and dining out together. Moments like these remind us how lucky we are to share this enduring friendship.



While we will see each other in NYC., we're already looking forward to next year in Aruba, our very happy place."Thank you for sending us this wonderful message sharing what Aruba means to you with us and our readers! □

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Data	Unlimited*	Unlimited*
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Other min	30	60
SMS	50	50
Duration	7 Days	14 Days
Price	\$30	\$50

SETAR

The stories of “Compa Nanzi”

(Oranjestad)—The most popular character you may hear about in the Caribbean is Anansi, known locally on Aruba as “Compa Nanzi”. Local children grew up hearing the tales of the conniving spider, and his legacy forms part of the oral narrative tradition that is common in Aruba.

Although the stories are most popular in the Caribbean, “Compa Nanzi” is not entirely unknown globally, especially not in the West African region. Brought to the “new world” by enslaved Africans from Ghana, the historical thread of how Nanzi was introduced on Aruba follows the enslaved Africans in Curacao during the colonial era, which saw the biggest population of enslaved Africans in the Dutch Caribbean.

The stories of Compa Nanzi were a sign of hope for freedom among the slaves, who passed around different stories involving the famous spider through word of mouth, due to not being able to express their native culture in the new world. These stories were a way to not only preserve their culture, but it acted as a medium for relief during the harsh treatment to which they were subjected to.

It wasn't until the end of the nineteenth century that the stories of Nanzi were written down in different languages. However, not all stories are completely alike in every country, as is the risk of oral story telling. However, one thing will always be dominant in Compa Nanzi's stories: his sneaky ways to get what he wants!

How Nanzi fooled the king

One day Nanzi was taking a stroll near the castle of Shon Arei, the king. He had this sudden urge to walk in. He didn't think too much about

it and committed to what he had in mind. It was a warm afternoon, and the castle personnel were taking their afternoon nap. Even the soldier guarding the castle door was fast asleep, snoring so loud that his beard bounced up and down on his chin. Nanzi just slipped past him, looked back for a moment then walk right on in.

Nanzi stumbled upon the king's quarters. With all his excitement he sat in the king's throne, and put on his crown that was hanging on the side of the throne. It was very hot that day, and it wasn't long until Nanzi too fell asleep, right there on the king's throne. He was so deep in sleep and snoring so loud, that even when the king found him in his seat, Nanzi did not even notice.

Shon Arei was flabbergasted by the sight of Nanzi on his throne, wearing his crown. How disrespectful! “Soldiers, get him!” he commanded. Nanzi was sound asleep, but when the soldiers picked him up, he jumped from fright. By then though, the soldier already had him in their hold.

“Put him in a sack, stitch it up and throw him in the ocean!” the king said furiously. Two soldiers immediately entered the chamber, took the crown off Nanzi's head and pushed him in a sack.

Nanzi was terrified; it looks like this time he won't get away with his schemes. To get to the ocean, the soldier walked a long distance, and where beginning to feel very thirsty. Luckily they passed by a pub, and decided to have a nice cold beer. They set the sack with Nanzi in it outside and went to enjoy the refreshments. Nanzi was still trembling with fear in the sack.

What is that he hears? A herd of sheep walking by?

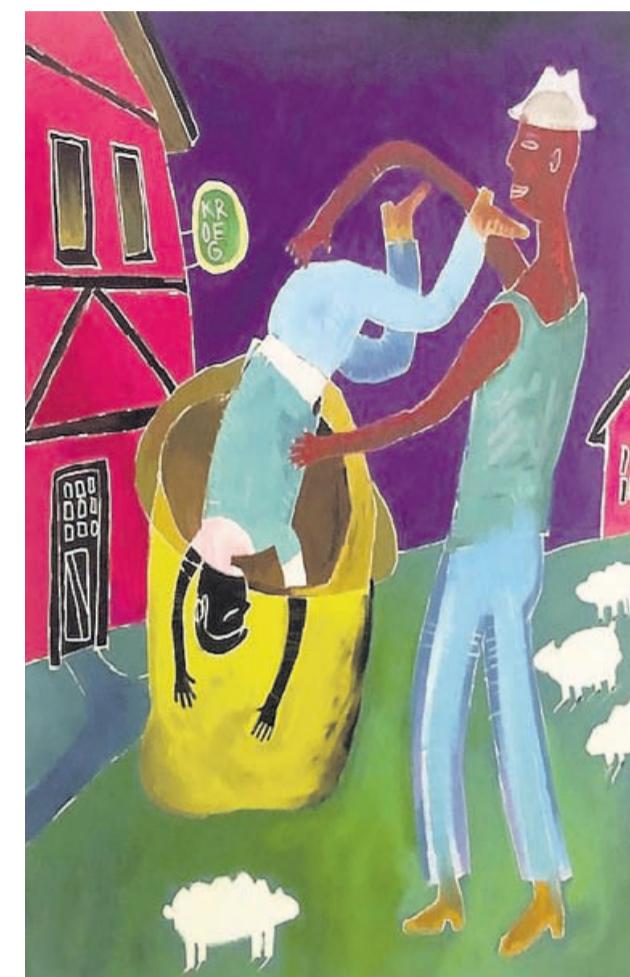
“Compadre, listen here!” Nanzi screamed as loud as he could. The sheep herder got close to the sack. “What is this?”

“Man, there is something very beautiful in here that you can see. It's very rare and strange, but indeed, there is something so beautiful in here that you've never seen or will ever see,” Nanzi told the herder.

The herder, very dumb, believed Nanzi's word. “Let me see!” he said.

“Well if you must insist,” Nanzi said, “I'll let you take a look, but only for a quick second.” The herder opened the sack, and Nanzi immediately jumped out. Before the herder could even take a look into the sack, Nanzi pushed him in it, and the herder fell head first in.

Nanzi didn't waste any time, and closed off the sack real tight. He then picked up the herder's hat and starting walking behind the traveling sheep as if nothing happened. After a little while, the soldiers headed back outside to continue their journey. As they picked up the sack,



the poor herder started screaming to let him out, but the soldiers ignored him, thinking it was Nanzi.

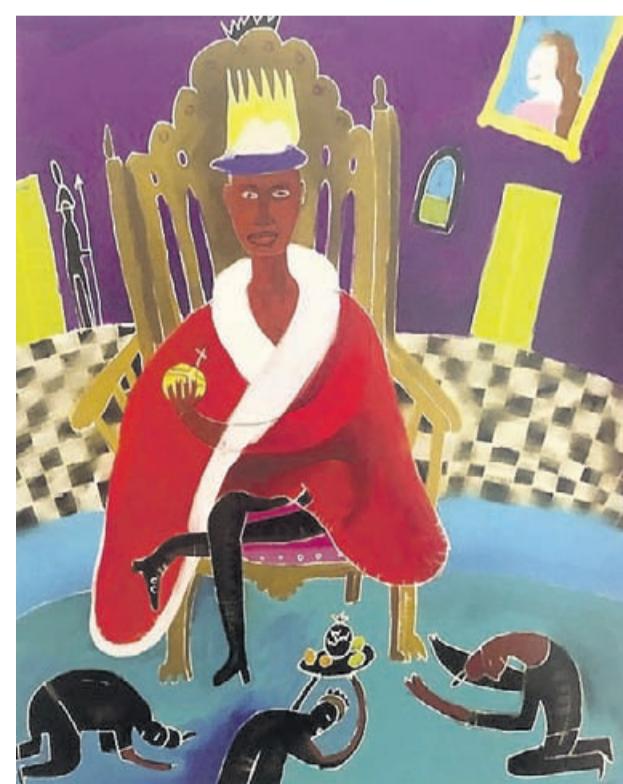
Shon Arei went strolling a while later. He thought to himself: “This time Nanzi could not get away with his foolishness. He probably drowned in that sack ages ago.” That is why, when he saw Nanzi walk behind the herd of sheep on the street, he was flabbergasted again. “Nanzi! Aren't you suppose to be at the bottom of the ocean floor?”

“I was, Your Majesty,” Nanzi replied. But you know what, there is so many things to see down there in the sack! Like this herd of sheep. Seeing that they had no herder, I started walking behind them and gained their trust pretty quickly. At the bottom of the ocean there are so many wonderful things, like diamonds, and bags of gold. Chests of silver and other precious stones,” Nanzi told the king.

“What is that you say?” the king was intrigued. “I want to see it too!”

The king immediately demanded to his soldiers to be put in a sack and be placed in the ocean. Naturally, Shon Arei died because of this. He was never found again. Nanzi followed the soldier back to the castle, where sat once again on the late king's thrown and put his crown on. He took possession of all of Shon Arei's belongings, and lived the rest of his life as king. □

Story and pictures are from “Kon Nanzi a Nek Shon Arei (i otro kuentanan antiano di e araña sabi)” by Nilda Pinto.



Did you know about...?

The history and meaning of the Aruban florin

(Oranjestad)—Aruba Today is proud to officially introduce a new segment called Did you know about...?, where we dive into some (historical) facts of Aruba, its culture and way of living. In this first edition, we look back at the Aruban florin: its history, design and symbolism.

In Aruba, we know the 5, 10, 25 and 50 cent coins, along with the 1 and 5 Florin coin. Aruban Florin bills include the 10, 25, 50, 100, and rarely, the 200 bills. In Papiamento we call our currency Florin, but the umbrella term for money is placa. Cents are called cen (pronounced: seng), both in the singular and plural form. Most coins are circular and their size depend on their worth. However, the 50 cent coin is easily recognizable by their square shape, as is the 5 Florin coin by their golden color. Every coin has the Aruban emblem carved on it, with the other side displaying the worth of the coin. The bigger 1 and 5 florin coins, however, contain the carving of the emblem on one side, while displaying the side profile of the Dutch king, Willem-Alexander, on the other side. When his mother, Princess Beatrix, was reigning queen, it was her profile that was carved on the two coins.

Outdated Aruban coins and their names

In the past, Aruban coins had distinctive names and also varied in worth. For example, a 5-cent coin was once called Dos placa; 10-cent coins were called debchi; 25-cent coins were called diez placa and the 50-cent coin was once called Yotin (pronounced: jo-teen). We also used a distinctive coins worth 2 ½ cents, called placa too. However, this last coin is no longer in use and has become a relic of Aruban money. Back then, the 5-Florin coin used to also be square, but now it is circular.

Aruban bills: their design and symbolism

The Aruban Florin collection contains a variation of colorful bills, displaying incredibly detailed and beautiful designs that tell the story of Aruba on a single piece of paper.

Prior to 2019, the Aruban Florin bills were relatively simpler in design compared to now, but still included beautiful designs



and colors, often depicting local animals. These past designs were made by the Aruban artist Everino Fingal in 1990 up to 2019. Between 1990 and 1993, the 5 Florin coin was a bill. The Fingal designs also included a 500-Florin bill, which has now been discontinued.

In 2019, the Central Bank of Aruba commissioned a new design of the Aruba Florin bills, this time selecting artist and former art teacher, Nigel Matthew, to present his new design. Matthew kept the tradition of including local animals and the familiar colors on the bills. However, he included additional designs that represent the Aruban culture and link to the Indigenous inhabitants that were the first to set foot on the island.

Current design and symbolism

10 florin

On the 10-florin bill, you can see a Turtuga blanco (white turtle). The blue color symbolizes the blue Caribbean Sea. You can also see the ruins of the Bushiribana Gold Mill Ruins, a coral motif, and the symbols of Cas Florida (traditional Aruban house design) with a piece of mosaic.

25 florin

On this orange bill, you can see an Aruban medicinal plant called Shoshoro. The birds Trupial, Shoco, rock drawings, and the symbols of Cas Florida with a piece of mosaic are also depicted. There is also a Purun di ceramica (clay pot), in reference to the relics left behind by our indigenous ancestors.

50 florin

On this bill, we see the Cododo (blue lizard found on the ABC islands), Cangreju di terra (land crab), Willem III Tower, and again the symbols of Cas Florida with a piece of mosaic, as well as a beach plant called Banana di rif. The colors are pink/purple.

100 florin

This bill is green in color, representing nature. Here we see the Yuwana (Iguana), Aloe, Toteki (lizard), the symbols of Cas Florida with a piece of mosaic, and a dance group performing the Baile di cinta (folkloric dance with silk ribbons).

200 florin

There is another bill with a value of 200 dollars. The brown color symbolizes the earth of Aruba. Here we see the Dorinasol and the Warawara—both local birds, along with the symbols of Cas Florida with a piece of mosaic, the Tuna cactus plant, and the Caha di orgel (folkloric instrument, used for many traditional songs).

Extra fact:

the word "florin" supposedly is named after the Italian city of Florence or it's a reference to the Italian word "florino", both explanations related to historical Italian currencies. □

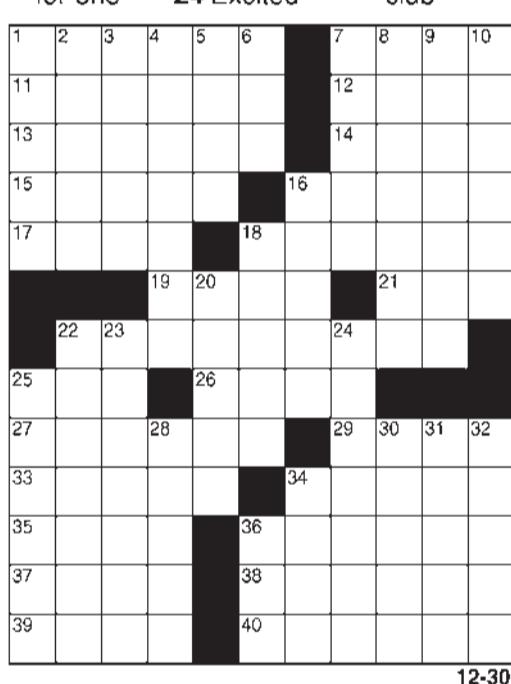
Source: Placa, placa, placa by the National Library of Aruba



CROSSWORD

By THOMAS JOSEPH

- ACROSS**
- 1 Fighting 38 Smiling, perhaps
 - 7 Lab container 39 Decline
 - 11 For each 40 Gets narrower
 - 12 Analogy words
 - 13 Feel empathy
 - 14 Visitor to Oz
 - 15 Spoiled kids
 - 16 Dyeing art
 - 17 Lacking
 - 18 Bible dancer
 - 19 Earth circler
 - 21 For each
 - 22 Some manipulated photos and videos
 - 25 Goat sound
 - 26 Account
 - 27 Pearl producer
 - 29 Puppy sounds
 - 33 Place
 - 34 Of the kidneys
 - 35 Atlantic catches
 - 36 Garment with laces
 - 37 Handling the situation



12-30

A X Y D L B A A X R
is L O N G F E L L O W

One letter stands for another. In this sample, A is used for the three L's, X for the two O's, etc. Single letters, apostrophes, the length and formation of the words are all hints. Each day the code letters are different.

12-30

CRYPTOQUOTE

G D Q Z J P L C Z J A Y D P U G Z
U G Y Z J G D C W D A U G Z T Z K Y U D
R D P Z , N G L J Q Z Y L H E , " L U N L C C
F Z G K Q Q L Z Y . " — K C A Y Z W
C D Y W U Z H H T J D H

Cryptoquote: LET ALL THE FAILURES OF YOUR PAST YEAR BE YOUR BEST GUIDE IN THE NEW YEAR — MEHMET MURAT II DAN



12-30

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G D Q Z J P L C Z J A Y D P U G Z
U G Y Z J G D C W D A U G Z T Z K Y U D
R D P Z , N G L J Q Z Y L H E , " L U N L C C
F Z G K Q Q L Z Y . " — K C A Y Z W
C D Y W U Z H H T J D H



12-30

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U G Y Z J G D C W D A U G Z T Z K Y U D
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F Z G K Q Q L Z Y . " — K C A Y Z W
C D Y W U Z H H T J D H



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CRYPTOQUOTE

G D Q Z J P L C Z J A Y D P U G Z
U G Y Z J G D C W D A U G Z T Z K Y U D
R D P Z , N G L J Q Z Y L H E , " L U N L C C
F Z G K Q Q L Z Y . " — K C A Y Z W
C D Y W U Z H H T J D H

Cruise ship Schedule: December 31 2024

TUE	31	AIDAMAR - Dept
		VOLENDAM
		SEABOURN OVATION
		FREEWINDS

ARR	DEPT	BERTH
****	23.59	B
08.00	23.00	C
08.00	21.00	I
06.00	****	E

Cruise ship Schedule: January 1 - 4 2025

WED	01	AIDAMAR - Dept.
		OCEANIA SIRENA
		CARNIVAL VISTA
		OASIS OF THE SEAS

ARR	DEPT	BERTH
****	02.00	-
07.00	18.00	B
08.00	16.00	C
21.00	****	I

THU	02	ISLAND PRINCESS
		MARELLA DISCOVERY
		EMERALD PRINCESS

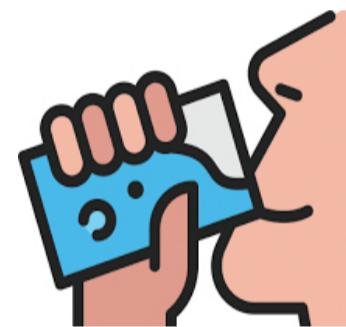
ARR	DEPT	BERTH
07.00	16.00	B
08.00	20.00	C
09.00	22.00	I

FRI	03	EURODAM
SAT	04	EXPLORA 1

ARR	DEPT	BERTH
08.00	21.00	C
08.00	16.00	B
08.00	18.00	C
06.00	18.00	I

Helpful tips for your stay on Aruba

(Oranjestad)—When traveling to another country, especially for the first time, it is always better to be over-prepared than under-prepared. That is why we have a list of basic but important information that we think may come in handy to Aruba's visitors.



buy bottled water from the store.

Electrical power

Aruba generally operates on 110V to 127V supply voltage and 60Hz. There are also three types of outlets used on the island: type A with two flat prongs; type B with two flat and one grounding prong, and on occasion, type F with two round prong and two earth clips on the side. However, Type A is most commonly found in homes and establishments.

Drinking water

The water that flows through the sinks of every house, hotels and other establishments is distilled and perfectly safe to drink. Aruba's drinking water exceeds WHO's international standards for water quality, so there is no need to

Supermarket hours

Supermarket hours may vary depending on where you are staying on the island. Generally though, most supermarkets are open from 8am to 9 or 10pm, Monday through Saturday. On Sundays, supermarkets generally close earlier; mostly around 2pm.

Safety

Since February 2024, Aruba has been categorized as the safest country in the Caribbean by The Telegraph, and many tourist that visit have often told us how they feel safe to explore the island or walk around at night. However, rare incidents do occur, so keep yourself and your belongings safe.

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johnnypaesch@gmail.com
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(53,820 sqf)
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Near Gloria Mall on Eagle beach
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Great investment opportunity

4,433 m2 property land at Palm beach
42 Apartments (39 of 88 m2 and 3 of 72 m2 sold) 3 stories building, pool deck with bar and gym, Price : \$5,278,309,20
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Price : \$ 300,000
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johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Classifieds

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2 x 1 BR Floating weeks
Platinum level All inclusive
Price :\$10,000 each
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Barcelo Resort

Palm beach
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All inclusive
Price :\$9000 each week
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Barcelo Resort

Palm beach
One bedroom Floating week
2 to 17 Prime time All inclusive
Price :\$12,000
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Barcelo resort

Palm beach
3 BR 3 Bath week 6 and 7
9th floor ocean front
All inclusive
Price :\$ 80,000 both weeks
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Barcelo resort

Palm Beach
One bedroom week # 8
All inclusive
Price: \$15,000
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

La Quita beach resort

Eagle beach
Two Bedroom week #12
Room # 2002 /2012
Phase 2
Price :\$10,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Marriott surf club

Palm beach
Two bedroom 2 bath
Ocean side
Platinum season
Price :\$25,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

218753

La Cabana Beach and Casino

Eagle beach
One bedroom week 51
Room # 329 A ocean view
Thursday check in
Price :\$ 9000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

218759

Divi Village

Eagle Beach
One bedroom week # 1
Room # 3208
11 weeks remaining building C
elevator ocean view
Price :\$7000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

Eagle beach
Studio week #1 room # 8201
Contract expire : 2043
Building D
Price :\$8000
Call:011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

Eagle beach
Studio wk # 5 room # 8105
Building D 1 st floor
Contract expire : 01/22/2037
Price :\$8000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village Golf

Eagle beach
One bedroom week # 9
Room # 2118 birdie 3
23 weeks remaining
Price :\$9000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm beach
One bedroom week 52 room
953 One bedroom week 01
room # 654
Contract expire : 2053
Price :\$60,000 both weeks
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm beach
Two bedroom week 01 room
#672
Contract expire :31 st December
2047
Price :\$35 ,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
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Aruba Divi Phoenix

Palm Beach
3 BR 3 Bath Penthouse
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For Rent

Divi Village Golf
Eagle Beach
One Bedroom sleep 4
Date :8 February to 15 February
2025
Price :\$2000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Renaissance ocean suites

Private islands
One bedroom week # 51
Room # 2136
Ground floor garden / ocean
view
Price :\$ 12,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Renaissance ocean suites

Private islands
One bedroom week # 01
Room # 2522
5th floor garden view
Price :\$11000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Renaissance ocean suites

Private islands
One bedroom week #2
Room # 2325
Pool /ocean view
Price :\$11,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

For rent

Barcelo resort
3 BR 3 Bath sleep 12
Date : 8 February to 22 Febru-
ary 2025
All inclusive
Price :\$5000 each week
Call:011-297-630-1307
Johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi village golf

Eagle beach
One bedroom week 50 room
#2258 Birdie 10
24 weeks remaining on the
contract Price : \$ 8000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village golf

Eagle beach
One bedroom week # 51
Room # 2258 Birdie 10
24 weeks remaining on the
contract Price : \$ 12,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle Beach
One Bedroom Week # 3
Room # 2318 \$ 9000
Studio WK # 3
room # 2317 \$8000
Both units :\$16,000
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village Golf

Eagle Beach
Studio week 5,6,7,8,9
Room # 2350 Birdie 10
35 weeks remaining on the
contract
Price :\$10,000 each week
Call :011-297-630-1307
johnnypaesch@gmail.com

Divi Village

Eagle Beach
One bedroom week # 52 room
3308
16 weeks remaining building C
Elevator ocean view
Price : \$10,000
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San Nicolas

Imsan 24 hours
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Dakota: Tel.588 7364
San Nicolas:
San Nicolas:Tel.584 5712

OTHER

Dental Clinic 587 9850
Blood Bank Aruba 587 0002
Urgent Care 586 0448
Walk-In Doctor's Clinic
+297 588 0539

EMERGENCY

Police	100
Oranjestad	527 3140
Noord	527 3200
Sta. Cruz	527 2900
San Nicolas	584 5000
Police Tipline	11141
Ambulancia	911
Fire Dept.	115
Red Cross	582 2219

TAXI SERVICES

Taxi Tas	587 5900
Prof. Taxi	588 0035
Taxi D.T.S.	587 2300
Taxi Serv. Aruba	583 3232
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ARUBA TODAY NEWS

Movie Review: Nicole Kidman commands the erotic office drama 'Babygirl'

By JAKE COYLE

AP Film Writer

The demands of achieving both one-day shipping and a satisfying orgasm collide in Halina Reijn's "Babygirl," a kinky and darkly comic erotic thriller about sex in the Amazon era.

Nicole Kidman stars as Romy Mathis, the chief executive of Tensile, a robotics business that pioneered automotive warehouses. In the movie's opening credits, a maze of conveyor belts and bots shuttle boxes this way and that without a human in sight.

Romy, too, is a little robotic. She intensely presides over the company. Her eyes



This image released by A24 shows Nicole Kidman, left, and Harris Dickinson in a scene from "Babygirl."

Associated Press

are glued to her phone. She gets Botox injections, practices corporate-speak

presentations ("Look up, smile and never show your weakness") and maintains

a floor-through New York apartment, along with a mansion in the suburbs that she shares with her theater-director husband (Antonio Banderas) and two teenage daughters (Esther McGregor and Vaughan Reilly).

But the veneer of control is only that in "Babygirl," a sometimes campy, frequently entertaining modern update to the erotically charged movies of the 1990s, like "Basic Instinct" and "9 1/2 Weeks." Reijn, the Dutch director of "Bodies Bodies Bodies" has critically made her film from a more female point of view, resulting in ever-shifting gender

and power dynamics that make "Babygirl" seldom predictable even if the film is never quite as daring as it seems to think it is.

The opening moments of "Babygirl," which A24 releases Wednesday, are of Kidman in close-up and apparent climax. But moments after she and her husband finish and say "I love you," she retreats down the hall to writhe on the floor while watching cheap, transgressive internet pornography. The breathy soundtrack, by the composer Cristobal Tapia de Veer, heaves and puffs along with the film's main character. □

How co-writing a book threatened the Carters' marriage

The Associated Press

NEW YORK (AP) — No ex-president had a more prolific and diverse publishing career than Jimmy Carter. His more than two dozen

books included nonfiction, poetry, fiction, religious meditations and a children's story.

His memoir "An Hour Before Daylight" was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in 2002, while his 2006 best-seller "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid" stirred a fierce debate by likening Israel's policies in the West Bank to the brutal South African system of racial segregation.

And just before his 100th birthday, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize Foundation honored him with a lifetime achievement award for how he wielded "the power of the written word to foster peace, social justice,

and global understanding." In one recent work, "A Full Life," Carter observed that he "enjoyed writing" and that his books "provided a much-needed source of income." But some projects were easier than others.

"Everything to Gain," a 1987 collaboration with his wife, Rosalynn, turned into the "worst threat we ever experienced in our marriage," an intractable standoff for the facilitator of the Camp David accords and winner of the Nobel Peace Prize.

According to Carter, Rosalynn was a meticulous author who considered

"the resulting sentences as though they have come down from Mount Sinai, carved into stone."

Their memories differed on various events and they fell into "constant arguments." They were ready to abandon the book and return the advance, until their editor persuaded them to simply divide any disputed passages between them. "In the book, each of these paragraphs is identified by a 'J' or an 'R,' and our marriage survived," he wrote. Here is a partial list of books by Carter:

"Keeping Faith: Memoirs of a President"

"The Blood of Abraham: In-

sights into the Middle East" (With Rosalynn Carter) "Everything to Gain: Making the Most of the Rest of Your Life"

"An Outdoor Journal: Adventures and Reflections"

"Turning Point: A Candidate, a State, and a Nation Come of Age"

"Always a Reckoning, and Other Poems"

(With daughter Amy Carter) "The Little Baby Snoogle-Fleejer"

"Living Faith"

"The Virtues of Aging"

"An Hour Before Daylight: Memories of a Rural Boyhood"

"Christmas in Plains: Memories" □

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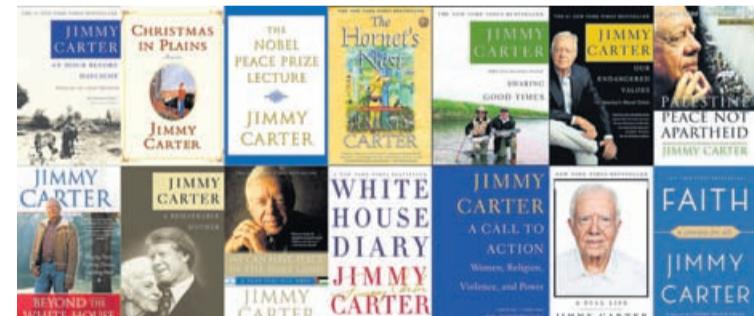
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This combination of book cover images shows some of the many books authored by President Jimmy Carter, top row from left, "An Hour Before Daylight: Memories of a Rural Boyhood," "Christmas in Plains: Memories," "The Nobel Peace Prize Lecture," "The Hornet's Nest: A Novel of the Revolutionary War," "Sharing Good Times," "Our Endangered Values: America's Moral Crisis," and "Palestine: Peace Not Apartheid," bottom row from left, "Beyond the White House," "A Remarkable Mother," "We Can Have Peace in the Holy Land: A Plan That Will Work," "White House Diary" (FSG), "A Call to Action: Women, Religion, Violence, and Power," "A Full Life: Reflections at Ninety," and "Faith: A Journey for All."

Associated Press

Top draft prospect James Hagens, a center for Boston College, is shining at world juniors with U.S.

OTTAWA, Ontario (AP) — James Hagens watched Macklin Celebrini closely last season as the player eventually picked No. 1 at the NHL Draft went about his business on the ice in impressive fashion.

Hagens was perhaps even more focused on how Celebrini stayed sharp amid all the attention.

"Never let anything affect him," he said. "You always saw him calm and collected. He went about it every day just working toward getting better. Everything works its way out."

It's an approach Hagens brought to his freshman NCAA season at Boston College facing similar expectations and has carried to the 2025 world junior hockey tournament. The 18-year-old center, who's in the mix to be the top pick in June, had five goals and 15 assists in 16 games at Boston College before joining the U.S. team for the under-20 tournament.

Celebrini had a banner 2023-24 season with 32 goals and 32 assists in 38 games with Boston University. He guided the Terriers to the Frozen Four and won the Hobey Baker Award as the top player in U.S. college hockey before getting



USA's James Hagens (12) looks for a pass past Germany's Timo Ruckdaschel (10) during 2025 IIHF World Junior Championship hockey game in Ottawa on Thursday, Dec. 26, 2024.

Associated Press

his name called first by the San Jose Sharks.

Hagens has similar dreams as he navigates what can be a head-spinning draft process.

"I've never seen him at all worried," Boston College associate coach Brendan Buckley told the Canadian Press. "He just goes about his business with a smile. You would never know he has all those expectations. He's just one of the guys."

Buckley was impressed when informed the player from Hauppauge, New York, kept tabs on how Celebrini handled his attention-filled freshman season. "He's willing to take it upon himself to do the little things to get better," said the former Boston College captain. "Some kids might overlook a little aspect like that, but little things can make it a bit easier along the way." Hagens so far at world ju-

nior has two goals and four assists through three games playing between NCAA linemates Ryan Leonard and Gabe Perreault.

"Knows what he's capable of and how good he really is," said Leonard, the No. 8 pick by the Washington Capitals at the 2023 draft. "He's in a really good spot." The five-foot-11 179-pound Hagens has experienced plenty of success in a career that saw him play two

seasons with the U.S. National Team Development Program. He's also had disappointment, including getting cut at age 17 from last year's world junior team that went onto capture gold in Sweden.

"Something that motivated me every day to train harder and be ready for this moment," Hagens explained. "With every opportunity you get, you've got to make sure you earn it. Nothing's going to be given." He was on the American squad that lost to Canada in the final at the under-18 world championship.

"That was hard," said Hagens, who went one better than Nikita Kucherov's previous tournament record of 21 points. "Something that just motivates everyone that was there."

U.S. coach David Carle said he sees a different player from the one he sent home last December.

"Physically, mentally a year further ... more ready for the challenge," he said. "We're going to lean on him."

Hagens is eager to have that weight on his shoulders.

"You've got to be grateful if you're a guy that has pressure," he said. □

Crosby breaks Lemieux's Penguins career assists record in 3-2 victory over the Islanders

By DAN SCIFO
Associated Press

PITTSBURGH (AP) — Sidney Crosby broke Mario Lemieux's Pittsburgh franchise career record for assists on Michael Bunting's power-play goal and the Penguins beat the New York Islanders 3-2 on Sunday night. Crosby has 1,034 assists, good for 12th in NHL history. Only three players Ray Bourque, Wayne Gretzky and Steve Yzerman have more assists with a single team. The 37-year-old Crosby has played 1,310-regular-season games. Lemieux played 915. Evgeni Malkin added the deciding power-play

goal in the third for Pittsburgh, which has 14 goals with the man advantage in its last 13 games. Anthony Beauvillier also scored to help the Penguins win for the seventh time in their last eight home games.

Alex Nedeljkovic made 29 saves in his first start since Dec. 17.

Kris Letang missed the game because of a lower-body injury, and defenseman Nathan Clurman made his NHL debut.

Anders Lee and Bo Horvat scored third-period goals for the Islanders, who fell behind 3-0 before their rally fell short. Marcus Hogberg stopped 38 shots during his

first start since April 28, 2021.

Takeaways

Islanders: Have lost five of their last eight games after splitting the back-to-back, home-and-home series with Pittsburgh.

Penguins: Rebounded from a 6-3 road loss against the Islanders 24 hours ago. Pittsburgh has won 10 of 15 after losing eight of its previous 10 games.

Key moment

Crosby was behind the net when he sent a backhand feed to Bunting, who buried his seventh power-play goal behind Hogberg at 1:36 of the second period, giving the Penguins a 2-0 lead. □



Pittsburgh Penguins' Sidney Crosby, center, acknowledges the crowd after surpassing Mario Lemieux for the franchise record for most assists during the second period of an NHL hockey game against the New York Islanders, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2024, in Pittsburgh.

Associated Press

Saquon Barkley is chasing Eric Dickerson's NFL season rushing record. Can he do it?

By DAN GELSTON

AP Sports Writer

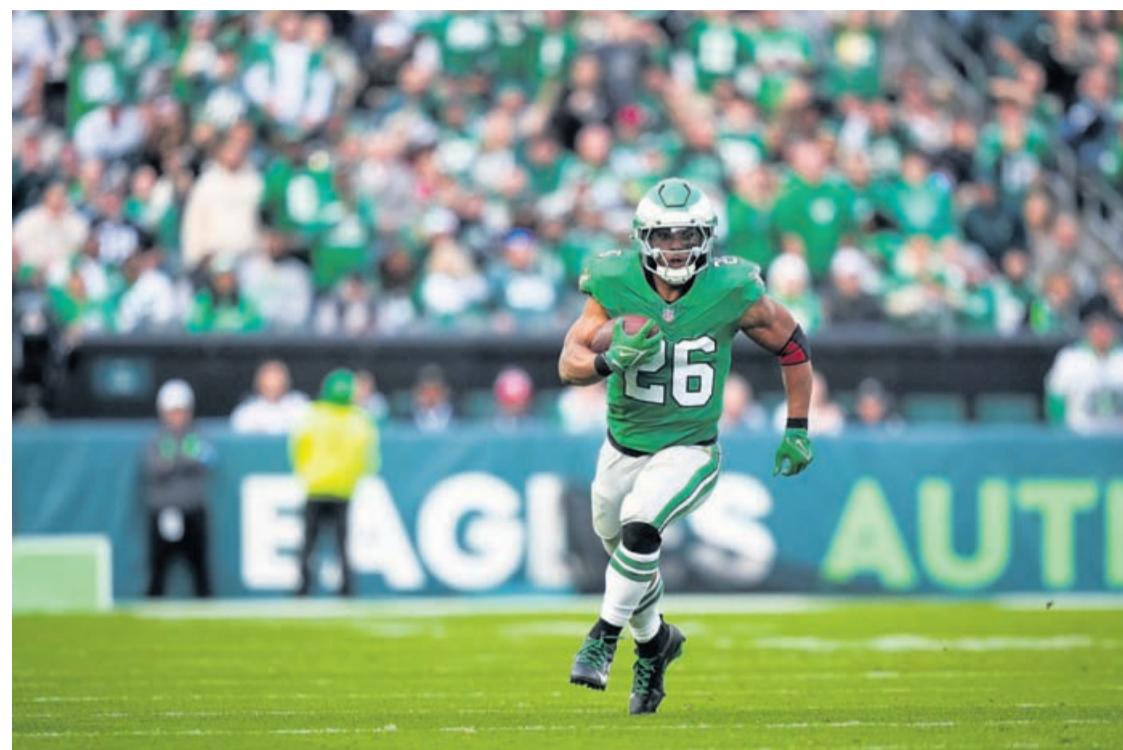
PHILADELPHIA (AP) — Saquon Barkley is down to his final game to try to break Eric Dickerson's season rushing record.

Can Barkley actually topple the 40-year-old mark of 2,105 yards set by the Los Angeles Rams great? Absolutely if he plays.

The Philadelphia Eagles clinched the NFC East title and the No. 2 seed in the NFC with a rout Sunday over Dallas, which makes the season finale essentially a glorified preseason game. Don't expect the Eagles to play quarterback Jalen Hurts who sat out against Dallas with a concussion and most key starters against New York. The Eagles will essentially treat Sunday like a bye.

Eagles coach Nick Sirianni will surely feel the pull to rest Barkley, too. Why play in a nothing game and risk injury to perhaps their most valuable player and only the ninth running back in NFL history to top 2,000 yards rushing in a season? The NFL rushing leader with 2,005 yards, Barkley is only 101 yards from topping Dickerson's mark.

The 27-year-old Barkley was politically correct after he ran for 167 yards against



Philadelphia Eagles running back Saquon Barkley (26) runs the ball against the Dallas Cowboys during the second half of an NFL football game, Sunday, Dec. 29, 2024, in Philadelphia.

Associated Press

Dallas yes, he wanted the record, but he's willing to do what's best for the team, even if that means sitting out the last game. Barkley gets an extra shot at the NFL record thanks to a 17th game of the season that Dickerson and the NFL did not have in 1984.

Here's a look at what's ahead for Barkley and his chances of catching Dickerson:

Where does Barkley stand in the record chase?

Barkley could clear 100

yards in the first half against the Giants. The Giants are 31st in the NFL against the run and Barkley ran for 176 yards and a touchdown in his first career game against them earlier this season.

Barkley is a hefty 222 yards ahead of Baltimore's Derrick Henry at 1,783 for the NFL lead.

Minnesota running back Adrian Peterson ran for 2,097 yards in 2012 and is second on the season rushing list.

Barkley could use the rest.

He leads the NFL with 345 carries and averages a league-high 125.3 yards rushing per game.

What they're saying

Barkley on playing Sunday:

"I mean, it's up to Nick, to be honest. And you know, whatever his decision is, I'm all for it. If his mindset is, we'll go out there and try it, I'll go out there and try it. But (if) his mindset is, let's rest and get ready for this run, then I'm all for that, too. I'm not just saying that because a camera's in my

face or mics in my face. I really mean that. I came here to do something special, and obviously breaking the record is special. But I want a banner up there."

Sirianni on possibly using Barkley against the Giants:

"We'll do what we need to do, what's right for the football team. Always got to do what's right for the football team to reach our goals of what we need to do. Like I said, I've got a lot to think about."

Dickerson to the Los Angeles Times on Barkley possibly breaking his record:

"I don't think he'll break it. But if he breaks it, he breaks it. Do I want him to break it? Absolutely not. I don't pull no punches on that. But I'm not whining about it. He had 17 games to do it? Hey, football is football. That's the way I look at it. If he's fortunate to get over 2,000 yards and get the record, it's a great record to have."

Why is Barkley with the Eagles?

Barkley has flourished in his first season with the Eagles. Barkley might enjoy the delicious twist of setting the record against his old team, the Giants but surely not the 17th-game asterisk that would come with the total.□

Six former Florida State players suing coach Leonard Hamilton over failed NIL payments

TALLAHASSEE, Fla. (AP) — Six former Florida State basketball players sued Seminoles coach Leonard Hamilton on Monday, alleging he failed to make good on a promise to get each of them \$250,000 in name, image and likeness compensation.

The plaintiffs Darin Green Jr., De'Ante Green, Cam'Ron Fletcher, Josh Nickelberry, Primo Spears and Jalen Warley filed suit in Leon County circuit court. Their attorney, Fort Lauderdale-based Darren Heitner, shared the 20-page complaint with The Associated Press. Yahoo Sports first re-



Florida State head coach Leonard Hamilton watches his team during the second half of the Atlantic Coast Conference second round NCAA college basketball tournament game against Virginia Tech, March 13, 2024, in Washington.

Associated Press

ported the case.

The former players allege Hamilton promised them the money from his "business partners." The lawsuit says they walked out of a practice last season over the missed payments and intended to boycott a Feb. 17 game against Duke. They ended up playing the Seminoles lost 76-67 amid a guarantee from Hamilton that they would be paid but never were, according to the suit.

No attorney for Hamilton was listed in the lawsuit. FSU hosts Syracuse on Saturday. The complaint includes multiple text-message ex-

changes between players and some between players and Hamilton.

FSU finished 17-16 last season, including 10-10 in the Atlantic Coast Conference. The 76-year-old Hamilton is in the final year of his contract. The Seminoles are 9-4, including 0-2 in league play.

None of the plaintiffs in the lawsuit remain with the team. Green and Nickelberry exhausted their college eligibility last spring, and the four others transferred. Spears is now at UTSA, Fletcher is at Xavier, De'Ante Green is at USF and Warley is at Gonzaga.□